

No. 23

23	Criticism Vs Garden Funds
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Criticism re. Garden Funds.

10024/17

(G. 3.)

From Whom **C. Secretary**

Place

Date

CRITICISM BY PROFESSOR BAKER ON

- 1) inadequacy of funds of Gardens
- 2) method of raising more by sales

Former Papers.

MINUTES.

Final Paper.

C.S.
① Letter from ~~MM~~ referring one by Prof Baker for recommendations.

Committee

Professor states that the funds of the Gardens are probably one half only of what is required for upkeep and supply nothing for aggressive work: that the system of supplementing them by sales is injurious because it diverts the Director from his legitimate work, and that the two conditions combined, i.e. want of funds compelling ~~cheese~~ ~~paring~~, and absorption of time by sales are costly to Government, and ~~MM~~ tend to such want of success ^{in circumstantial start} as leads to public comment with the consequent weakening of the authority of the Director. *He adds that immediate staff is almost.*

With this you will agree.

The cures are not changes of methods, but staff and funds. When we have an Assistant Curator he sees to the sales, and the Director is not burdened with it.

I believe in sales. A man who gets stuff free asks for more than he wants and does not value it when he gets it. Therefore I say sell. I say also that the carrying of stock for sale in moderation is good as it gives the Gardens more to select from for internal use. The sale of rubber is part of a selection scheme, and the making use of a bye-product of the production of seeds for the Colony.

But by reason of insufficient funds from Government we have ~~had~~ to exploit our resources.

Professor Baker made out his "Balance Sheet" as the result of arguments with me: and he sent it to the Colonial Secretary by an afterthought after leaving. It strengthens our position, as he meant it to do. And we can say in reply that our own careful estimates result in arriving at the same conclusion, namely that the funds of the gardens are one half of what they should be: also that we hope to find the Director relieved of sales by the appointment of an Assistant Curator at the earliest opportunity, and a

*Fixed Assistant curating as a by-product of
intermediate crop.*

J. H. H. H.

It is obvious that if the Gardens are to be not only maintained, but enabled to progress, it must be a question of staff and money. Nov 11/18

Jul. 5.1.18

7.1.18.

12.5.18

O.A.B.



Telegraphic Address:—

"SECRETARY, SINGAPORE."

It is requested that the following number be quoted in the reply to this letter.

No. 10024/17.

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Singapore, 17th December, 1917.

Sir,


I am directed to forward for the information of the Committee of Management of the Botanic Gardens the enclosed copy of a letter dated the 12th December addressed to this Government by Professor Baker together with a Report.

2. I am to ask you to obtain and forward any recommendations the Committee may have to make after considering the letter and Report.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,


Colonial Secretary,
Straits Settlements.

The Director of Gardens,

Straits Settlements,

SINGAPORE.

BOTANIC GARDENS, SINGAPORE,
STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

December 12th, 1917.

Sir,

I beg to thank you for your kind note of December 10th and desire to express the heartiest appreciation of the uniform courtesy and consideration with which I have been favored by this Government.

As I depart, permit me to say that I have done my uttermost - with the greatest goodwill - for the Botanic Gardens and for agricultural and scientific interests in the Colony. The Gardens, as indicated by the articles of foundation, possess potentialities, which, when fully developed, must inevitably result in great economic gains to the Colony. At present, development is not only impossible but mere up-keep has become a matter of extreme difficulty. The Director, in the hand-to-hand struggle with these difficulties, has exhibited a loyal devotion, and a willingness to sacrifice himself, both physically and professionally, that are exceedingly rare. He does not believe that Government should be asked for greater support at this serious juncture in the affairs of the Empire. I cannot possibly agree with him in this view, both on the score of the possible permanent impairment of his own usefulness, and because there are possibilities in the Gardens, which, if developed, would be of greater service to the Colony now, than at any other time.

Hence I have prepared what might be termed as "minority report" - very condensed - based upon five months study of the general situation, a copy of which I have filed with the Director, and which report I request the kind indulgence of permission to submit to you, herewith.

Assuring

The Colonial Secretary,

S I N G A P O R E.

Assuring you of my continued and keenest interest in the development of scientific agriculture and its related sciences in the Colony, and my extreme regret at the necessity of leaving at this time, I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

St. C. F. Baker.

Retiring Assistant Director of Gardens.

(Dean of the College of Agriculture of the
Philippines).

THE BOTANIC GARDEN.

All that the Colony possesses to represent a Department of Agriculture, and to represent the Sciences underlying Agriculture - fundamental as well, in Education.

Balance Sheet at close of 1917.

Profit (Economies)

Loss

1.

Has a very limited subordinate personnel - all low salaries.

This consumes the time of the Director in trivial matters of administration (and these he cannot entirely cover, even with utmost effort), thus completely sacrificing his services as a scientific expert.

2.

Is given a very small supporting grant, thus compelling it to make up the remainder by a large number of small commercial sales.

Most of this business must be looked after personally by the Director, still further burdening him with trivial detail. Counting his time at \$20 per day, and the expense (with overhead) of producing this stock under these conditions, and every dollar so made doubtless costs the government several dollars.

3.

Compels distribution of plants only by sale on order so that the place may be kept alive.

This prohibits the general distribution throughout the Colony of planting stocks of great economic value, thus defeating one of the most important ends for which the institution was founded.

4.

Statements are made that present conditions are due to war time economies, though similar extraordinarily stringent economies appear to have been in effect for five years or more.

It is precisely in war time that greater activities and greater outlays are expected in such a department, than at any other time, since food crop work, especially, should then be pushed at highest possible speed. The alternative is war allowances and increased pay for laborers and employees on account of high cost of living - outlays many times greater than an effective food campaign would cost, with the added loss of the impetus and influence which would extend on into times of peace.

5.

Amount of labor used is probably one-half that necessary for first class upkeep - to say nothing of aggressive work.

Draws public criticism on details which are quite inconsequential, in comparison to the forcing of a failure to accomplish the greater purposes for which the Gardens were founded, thus breaking down the prestige of the Gardens, and impairing the influence of its Director.

Profits (Economies)

Loss

6.

Salaries offered are so small that thoroughly competent foreman gardeners cannot be employed.

Ignorant foreman have lost and confused labels and records - have even lost entire cultures - and have, in this and other ways, very seriously impaired the scientific value of the Gardens - to an extent that will require years of the most expert attention to restore, at far larger expense to the government than competent help would have cost.

The logical conclusion of following out this policy will inevitably result in degeneration from a scientific institution to a mere municipal park - as has already happened in Penang.

No Minutes should be written on this page. A separate half-sheet
to be used if required.



The Botanic Garden

All that the Colony possesses to represent a Department of Agriculture, and to represent the sciences underlying Agriculture — sciences indispensable also to Education.

Balance Sheet at end of 1917

Profit (Economics)	Loss
Has a very limited subordinate personnel — all low salaries	This consumes the time of the Director in matters of trivial administration (and thus he cannot entirely cover at any expense of effort) thus completely sacrificing his services as a scientific expert.
Is given a very small supporting staff, thus compelling it to make up the remainder by many small commercial sales.	Much of this income must be directly passed over to the Director, who further burdens him with trivial detail. Permitting him to work at \$20. per day and the expense (with overhead) of producing the stock under these conditions, and every dollar so made does not cost the government several dollars.
Compels distribution of plants in the colony only by sale or order — so that the place may be kept alive.	This prohibits the general distribution throughout the colony of planting stock of great economic value, thus defeating one of the most important ends for which the institution was founded. If carried to logical consequences, the policy under that two heads results in degeneration from a scientific institution to a mere municipal park, as has already happened in Penang.

15th. January, 1917

Sir,

I am instructed by the Gardens Committee to acknowledge the reference of file 10034/17 to the Committee. The file contains a letter by Professor G.F. Baker which may be summed up as follows:-

The funds of the Gardens are probably one half only of what is required for upkeep and supply nothing for aggressive work: the system of supplementing the By sales is injurious because it diverts the Director from his legitimate work: the two combined tend to such want of success in horticultural details as leads to public comment with the consequent weakening of the authority of the Director: intermediate staff is absent.

27. The Committee's reply to your reference of file 10032/17 ^{is dated} stating that an addition of £10,000 to your vote of £12,376, shows agreement on the first comment. Upon the second the Committee wish to record that when an Assistant Curator is present, or other intermediate staff, the burden of sales does not fall on the Director, and appears beneficial to the Gardens as well as to the Colony generally.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

1. Rubber Store keeper @ 63 p.d. Sundays included ...	19.00
1. Gardener @ 66 cents per diem.....	16.50
1 Gardener @ 63 cents	15.75
2. Gardeners @ 58 cents14.50.....	29.00
12 Gardeners @ 55 cents 13.75	165.00
23 Scythemen @ 50 cents ... 12.50	287.50
57 Weeders @ 50 cents 12.50	712.50
6 Tappers @ 55 cents ... 13.75	82.50
3 Rubber preparers ... 12.50	37.50
29 women and boys @ 35 .. 8.75	253.75

1619.00 p.m.

19428.00 p.a.

is. \$9304 extra required.
 being say 3000 to meet the cost of
 increased cost of keeping
 the men that we
 have, and
 good to employ the
 men that we want
 additionally.

Committee

I told you that we have work for half as
 many more men than we have. We have
 \$10124 down on the budget for labour, and the
 5062
 15186 and 25% what is the minimum for labour
 3756
 18942 a good below what the budget for labour - Committee

Profit (Economies)

Statements are made that present conditions are due to war-time economies, though similar extraordinarily stringent economies appear to have been in effect for five years or more.

Loss

It is precisely in war time that greater activities and greater outlays are expected in such a department, than at any other time, since the food crop work, especially, should then be pushed at highest possible speed. The alternative is war-allowances and increased pay due to high cost of living — outlays many times greater than a comprehensively effective food campaign would cost, with the added loss of the impetus and influence which would extend on into times of peace.

Amount of labor used is probably one-half that necessary for first-class upkeep, to say nothing of aggressive work.

Draws public criticism on details which are quite inconsequential in comparison to forcing a failure to accomplish the greater purposes in which the Gardens were founded, thus breaking down the prestige of the Gardens and impairing the influence of its Director.

Salaries offered are so small that thoroughly competent foreign gardeners cannot be employed.

Ignorant and careless women have lost and confused labels and records — have frequently lost entire cultures — and have in this and other ways, very seriously impaired the scientific value of the Gardens, to an extent that will require years of the most expert attention to restore, at far larger expense to the Government than competent help would have cost.